



MUSIC
MANAGERS
ACCELERATOR



Accelerator is 5

115 managers, 450+ music makers, 1 accelerator



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

MMF Accelerator Report

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Introduction

The groundbreaking Accelerator Programme has helped us tell an important story - *that music managers matter*.

Every day, MMF members perform small miracles on behalf of artists, songwriters, producers and other creative talent. They keep the show on the road. They look after their clients. They get business done.

However, to achieve these things, they need to be running viable businesses. It was to square this circle that we established Accelerator in the first place - as the world's first funding and training programme specifically for independent music managers.

In the five years since we welcomed our first participants, the impacts of Accelerator have been undeniable. Over that period 115 managers on the programme have developed an impressive array of artists, including the likes of PinkPantheress, FLO, The Reytons, Wes Nelson, Bree Runway, Joy Crookes, Moses Boyd and Eliza Rose. Collectively, this has resulted in 13 Top 40 albums, alongside a string of industry awards and nominations, including winners of BBC Radio 1's Sound Of... list in 2022 and 2023.

Beyond these high profile successes, Accelerator has resulted in many profound changes, both within the MMF's thriving community of music managers and beyond.

Key among these is the establishment of new self-sustaining networks. While management can often be an isolated path, Accelerator has actively encouraged information sharing between its alumni. This has resulted in the creation of a genuine community, where music managers can ask questions and share knowledge in a safe space, supplementing the expert training and development they received as part of the programme. This rising tide has lifted all boats. As well as breaking down barriers of geography and genre, it has enabled the programme to enjoy an ongoing legacy, where participants can continue to enquire, collaborate and champion each other's successes.

In turn, these dynamics have also informed and complemented the activities of the MMF - providing invaluable insights to the challenges faced by music entrepreneurs from all genres and backgrounds, as they strive to build sustainable businesses. On reflection, it is no surprise that two former Accelerator participants now sit on the MMF board, or that the MMF was recently awarded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status by Arts Council England (ACE) as a result of our strong track record of providing professional development services.

The inherent diversity of Accelerator, and the inclusion of managers from historically marginalised backgrounds, has contributed significantly to the programme's overall outcomes. Some of the most commercially successful Accelerator participants have been women, people of colour and those from outside of London - helping us unlock potential and fulfil untapped talent wherever in the UK it resides.

2019

- Accelerator launches with its first 24 managers - supported by YouTube Music, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland and the SMIA.

A first year celebration is hosted at YouTube Space showcasing Jordan Mackampa (managed by Charlie Murdoch) and Diving Station (managed by Sam Meghan).

YouTube Music's Lyor Cohen hosts his first "in conversation" talk with MMF Chair Paul Craig at London's Metropolitan University.

2020

- Accelerator participants deliver Top 20 albums for Dream Wife (managed by Tim Hampson) and Nafe Smallz (managed by Ashley Perry).

Wes Nelson, managed by Rian Zoll Khan and Ian Tunstall, goes Top 3. Rian and Ian met during the previous year's programme.

Moses Boyd (managed by Koyejo Oloko) is nominated for the Mercury Prize.

2021

- Charlie Owens' client Joy Crookes releases a Mercury-nominated Top 5 album.

Former Accelerators Clare Sanders-Wright and Nike Durusaro are elected to the MMF board.

2022

- PinkPantheress, co-managed by 2021 participant Phoebe Gould, tops the list for BBC Radio 1's Sound of 2022.

Phoebe and Charlie Owen are nominated for Manager of The Year at the Music Week Awards.

Callum Reece wins Breakthrough Manager of The Year at Artist & Manager Awards.

Accelerator partners with the British Music Embassy at SXSW, supporting 11 managers to showcase their clients.

2023

- 24 new participants join the programme, and Accelerator passes a new landmark - with more than 100 managers supported.

FLO, managed by Rob Harrison, top BBC Radio 1's Sound of 2023 list. The Reytons, managed by Rich Goodwin, top the UK album charts.

Creative Wales confirmed as a funding partner for Accelerator.

The Fund Aims & Objectives



The initial goal of Accelerator was to solve a recurring conundrum: in an increasingly artist-centric music industry, where the status and responsibilities of music managers had been expanded and elevated, it remained frustratingly difficult to build a long-term music management business.

This Catch 22 situation was illustrated in the MMF's 2019 *Managing Expectations* report, which highlighted how a substantial number of managers were - out of necessity - juggling a multitude of different jobs. They took responsibility for everything from the release of their clients' recordings and social media to touring, PR and accountancy. 74% of those we surveyed were investing personal finance into the creative projects of the artists they worked for.

Such self-sacrifice might be necessary for getting an artist's career off the ground, but the consequences are problematic for managers reliant on commission-based earnings.

To find a solution, the MMF talked extensively to YouTube Music and Arts Council England - which led to the birth of Accelerator in 2018.

This new year-long programme would provide talented independent managers with finance (in the form of a grant) coupled with an intense, structured training and support package. This would be developed around MMF's existing educational courses covering the Essentials of Music Management and the Mechanics of Music Management, coupled with sessions with expert speakers from across the industry, and concluding with an intense weekend-long retreat.

About the MMF

The MMF is the world's largest professional community of music managers.

The organisation works to educate, inform and advocate for a growing membership of over 1,400 UK-based businesses. Alongside Accelerator, other key MMF initiatives include the long-running Dissecting The Digital Dollar project and high-profile campaigns #LetTheMusicMove and FanFair Alliance. The MMF is a founding member of UK Music, the European Music Managers Alliance (EMMA), the Council of Music Makers (CMM) and Live Music Industry Venues & Entertainment (LIVE).

Accelerator's 5 main aims

1. Growth

To strengthen and stimulate UK-based music management enterprises and support this growing sector, driving activity, artistic development, and investment.

2. Diversity

To enable a diverse talent pool of next-generation music managers in expanding their economic and cultural footprint within the UK and around the world.

3. Support

To address investment gaps at key phases of managers' company and industry development cycles.

4. Skills

To develop key skill sets in the management community, through training and mentoring.

5. Resilience

To springboard self-sustainable businesses that can go on to develop multiple artist careers

Accessibility, diversity, inclusion & opportunity



We also wanted to ensure Accelerator operated as a genuinely nationwide programme, built upon core values of accessibility, diversity, inclusion and opportunity.

This meant ensuring the application process was as accessible and inclusive as possible, and open to managers who may not have previously applied for funding. It was delivered in two stages.

First, encouraging managers to submit a short video or voice submission to tender their interest, and, for those applicants who reached Stage Two, by supplying a detailed two-year business plan. In terms of eligibility, applicants needed to demonstrate an 18 month commitment to professional management, and have a client or clients with a previous annual turnover of at least £20,000. All Stage Two applicants were offered feedback discussions and participants gave the programme's application process an **average score of 8.8 / 10** in our independent evaluation.

Across the five years a wide range of professional music managers and other industry professionals have contributed their time and expertise to our decision making: Natalie Wade, Victor Redwood-Sawyer, Jackie Davidson, Kwame Kwaten, Paul Craig, Jill Hollywood, Ellie Giles, Steven Braines, Ross Patel, Rachael Bee, Dave Manders, Ric Salmon, Sumit Bothra, Matt Thornhill, Paul Crockford, Wozzy Brewster, Lily Crockford, Kate Lowes, Karl Nielson, Kerry Harvey-Piper, Sam "Whiskas" Nicholls, Rebekah Taylor, Liza Buddie, Clare Wright-Sanders Nike Durosaro, Simon Dix, Mike Gillespie, Dan Garber.

CONTINUED...

From inception, Accelerator has been bold in its aim of and understanding of diversity.

Throughout our application processes we have an open box and optional data collection to key protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We aim to have a person-led approach, recognising that barriers and assumptions need discussion and challenging rather than box filling.

In order to support a diverse talent pool of next-generation music managers, we listen to the needs of eligible applicants and use the MMF membership data as a reference point in balancing decision-making. This approach to diversity was replicated in our thinking about geography and ensuring Accelerator attracted a diverse spread of managers from across the UK.

We therefore worked closely with our funding partners Arts Council England, the Scottish Music Industry Association, Creative Scotland and Creative Wales to ensure we could specifically target applications and support managers on a nationwide level. Additionally, each year we have annually reviewed our strategic partnerships with music organisations such as Brighter Sound, Music:Leeds, and Generator to address gaps and ensuring that regional leaders are recognised and celebrated through our communications.

We hope in future to find a funding partner from Northern Ireland and further our relationships with place-based music development organisations across the UK. The range of music managers supported has been phenomenal, with participants able to support artists from an incredibly wide genre-set, from classical to drill.

Five years on from our launch, not only are the vast majority of Accelerator participants thriving and still active in music management, many have forged new kinds of commercial partnerships or expanded their talents.

Crucially, they have also continued to diversify their support of a wide range of talent - generating new economic activity, even during a global pandemic, and ensuring artists, songwriters and other music-makers can continue to reach global audiences and thrive. The investment makes financial sense.

Throughout the monitoring of Accelerator we have evidenced that at least £9.4m has been generated in turnover for the artists represented by managers on the programme.

The investment has also seen alumni invest in their own businesses - further creating jobs, new partnerships and adding new strings to their ventures. This is a huge achievement. Despite two years of pandemic dramatically hitting artists' and managers' income, the programme helped sustain some businesses which almost certainly would not have survived otherwise.

Thanks to the foresight and generosity of our friends at YouTube Music, Arts Council England, Creative Wales, Creative Scotland and the Scottish Music Industry Association, Accelerator has helped put music managers on a far stronger footing. And if music management can thrive in the long term, then so will the livelihoods of music-makers and everyone else who builds partnerships from their talent.



We are incredibly proud of our role in co-creating the Accelerator programme with the Music Managers Forum 5 years ago.

Being a manager is one of the toughest jobs in the music industry and through our Futuremaker partnerships, we are committed to supporting the next generation of talent on both sides of the mic. We've seen so much progress so far from this best in class programme and I look forward to what the future holds as we move forward.

– Dan Chalmers (Head of Music, YouTube, EMEA)

CLASS OF 2023

Alex Putman // Alfie Briggs // Ben Magee // Bradley Kulisic // Danni Skerritt
Declan McAlister // Frances Barber Shillito // Hannah Turnbull-Walter // Isus Calmellow
Jamil Carrol // Jamila Scott // Jim Frew // Joel Reyes // Kariss Andrew // Kieran Thompson
Leon Wright // Marley Azu-Jones // Nina Smith // Sade Lawson // Trina Smith
Vanessa Sinclair // Willem Lord // Willow Dingwall-Fordyce // Yvonne Ellis

CLASS OF 2022

Abi Getto // Adrian Thomas // Anique Cox // Alessia Avallone // Cecilie Dreyer
Charlene Hegarty // Cillian Farrell // Cleo Amedume // Daryl Pryor // Georgina Akers
Hamish Fingland // Henry Carden // India Allen // Katarzyna Piatkowska // Lucy Fitzgerald
Maria Torres // Naomi Belshaw // Pascal Balletti // Rapheal Adekunle // Rich Goodwin
Sim Virdi // Steven Odufuye // Thandolwenkosi Zulu // Yasin El Ashrafi

CLASS OF 2021

Adam Daly // Adetokunbo Oyelola // Ben Price // Danny Desai // Demonie Demetrue Wilson
Despa Robinson // Ella-Bonai Gordon // Feedy Frizzi // Ina Tatarko // Jamie Ibe // Joseph Peach
Josh Cohen // Lauren Roth de Wolf // Lu Whiting // Michael Lambert // Nigel Munjoma
Phoebe Gold // Rob Harrison // Sarah Mhamdi // Shikayla Nadine // Clacken-Lewin // Taisha Jay
Thomas Bellhouse // Ameena Badley

CLASS OF 2020

Andrew Ellis // Ashley Perry // Bobby Brown // Charlie Owen // Christopher Grey // Clare Wright
Conor Ferris // Denise Allan // Earl Marcus Bailey // Edric Avakian // Gaius Mavila // Jade Richardson
// Jasmine Srih // Jazz Rocket // Kaiya Milan // Louis Curran Lyle Scougall // Megan Burns
Pip Newby // Tim Hampson

CLASS OF 2019

Benjamin John Skerritt // Callum Reece // Charlie Murdoch // Charlotte Caleb // Chris Chadwick
Christopher Hunte // Dave Rowett // Georgia Strawson // Grant Brydon // Ian Tunstall // Jen Long
Jessica Slater // Koyejo Oloko // Loretta Andrews // Louie John Lewis // Lulu Davis // Nick Myers
Nike Durosaro // Rachel Millar // Rian Zoll-Khan // Samuel Joseph Meaghan // Stephen Archibald
Tom Hutton // Victoria Becks

A deeper dive Accelerator by numbers



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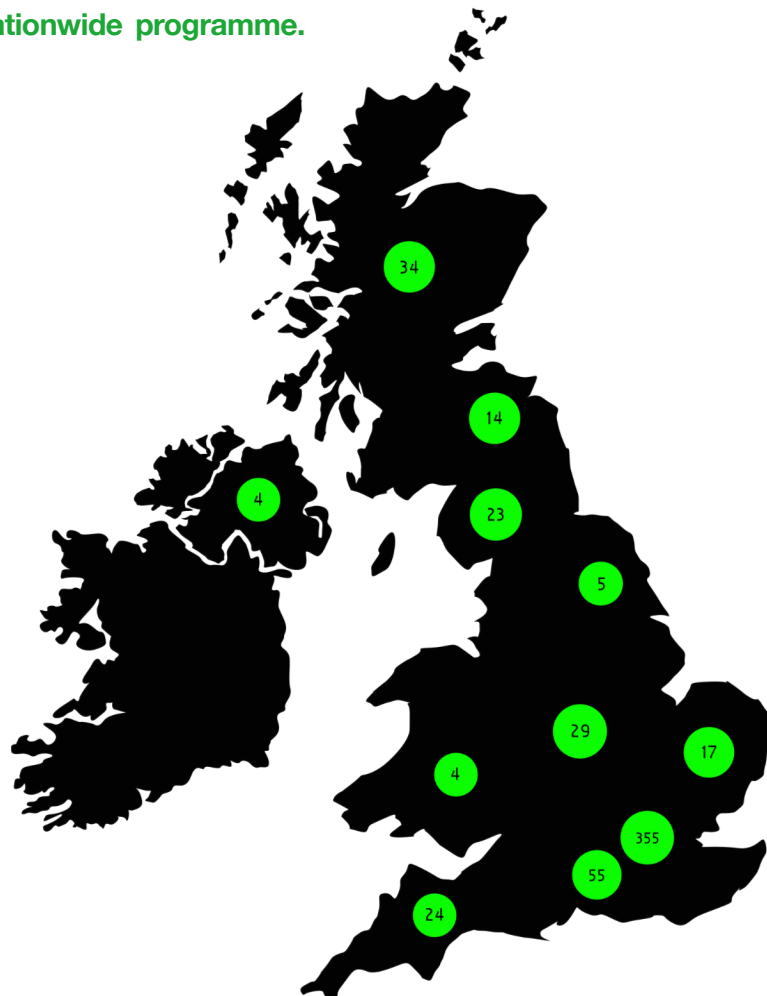
Each year, the MMF has sought information about every manager who applies and participates in Accelerator, helping us to improve the programme and ensure its impacts reach all corners of the UK.

For the first time, we now present this data - illustrating how Accelerator has attempted to encourage participation regardless of location, ethnicity or gender.

Geography

Total applications by region

Although the majority of applications came from London and the South East, we have worked hard to make Accelerator a truly nationwide programme.



Geography

Total applications vs final selections

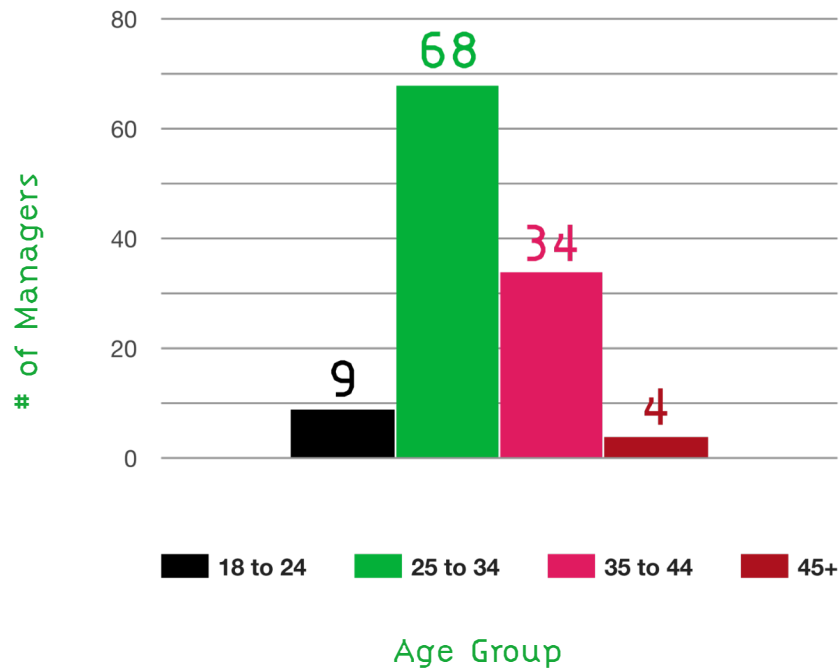
Region	% Total Applications	% Final Selections
Scotland	6%	8%
Northern Ireland	1%	2%
North East	2%	4%
North West	4%	6%
Midlands	6%	8%
London	62%	56%
South East	9%	6%
South West	4%	5%
Yorkshire & Humber	2%	1%
East	3%	2.5%
Wales	4%	2%
Total #	573	115

Demographics

Age

Whilst Accelerator is aimed at relatively new managers whose clients businesses are at a tipping point (18 months minimum experience) it is ultimately about stage not age - and therefore open to all.

Accelerator offers one of the few opportunities for people to enter the industry outside of the many schemes targeted at under 25s.



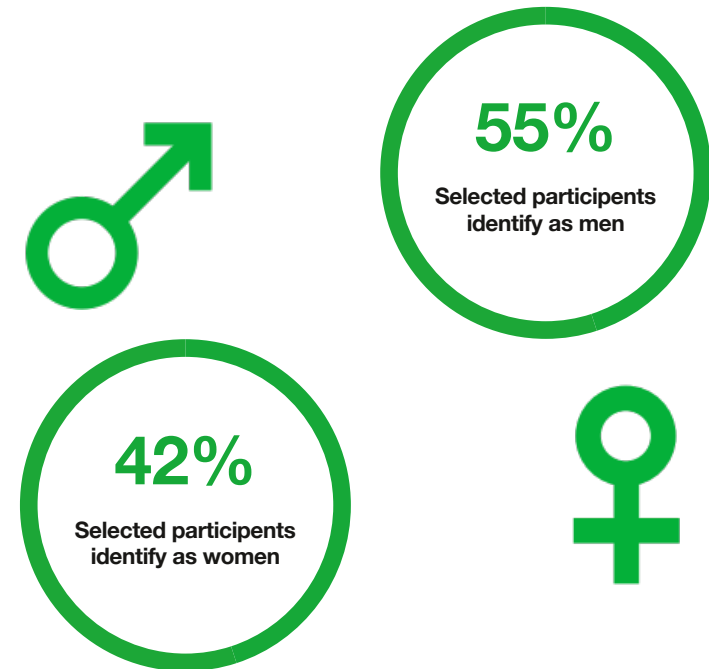
Demographics

Gender

Of the total selected applicants 42% identify as women, seeing a proportionally higher success rate, but significantly lower number of applications received.

To encourage applications from female managers, the MMF has developed close partnerships with Women in CTRL, Brighter Sound and shesaid.so, alongside our work with the UK Music Diversity Task Force.

Further work and advocacy for women in music is needed across the whole industry, but Accelerator is making a noticeable contribution - with many of the most commercially successful stories coming from female managers supported by the programme.



Demographics Total applications by gender

Year	Female	Male	Non-binary or gender minority
2019	41	85	
2020	28	51	
2021	51	93	
2022	34	72	1
2023	42	67	2
Total #	196	368	3
% of Total	34.75%	65.25%	2.5%

Demographics Final selected applications by gender

Year	Female	Male	Non-binary or gender minority
2019	10	14	
2020	8	13	
2021	13	9	
2022	13	11	
2023	9	13	2
Total #	49	64	2
% of Total	42.61%	55.65%	1.7%

Demographics

Ethnicity

Accelerator's open-box data collection allows for various identities to be expressed. Of the total selected applications, **43% identify as coming from what can be summarised as a Black, Asian or Ethnic background.** This is higher than our overall membership, which currently stands at approximately 30%. We intend to strengthen our commitment towards progressive inclusion by exploring barriers regarding ethnicity further in dialogue with partners and our members.

People from non-white backgrounds have statistically been more successful in the programme selection, possibly through our development of relationships with networks and targeted outreach to organisations such as Young Music Boss, I Luv Live, Small Green Shoots and ESSA Music.

Accelerator has also worked closely with managers engaged within the MMF Unite discussions established in 2020 and our sponsored membership bursaries supported by the Universal Music's Taskforce for Meaningful Change.



43%

of final selected applications are from Black, Asian or Ethnic backgrounds

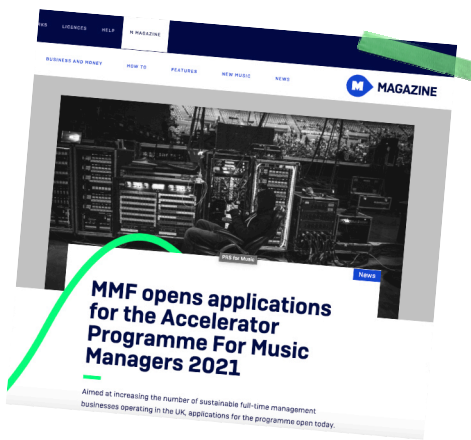
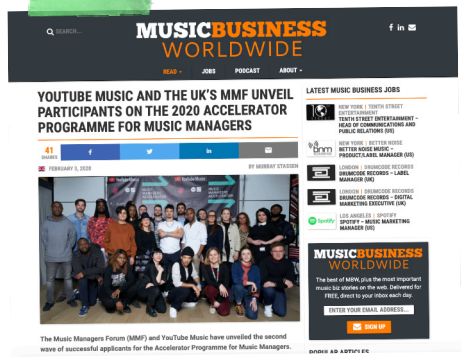
Total applications by ethnicity

Year	Black, Asian or Ethnic background	White (including white European and other white backgrounds)
2019	40	86
2020	23	56
2021	55	89
2022	42	64
2023	44	66
Total #	204	361
% of Total	36.17%	64.01%

Final selected applications by ethnicity

Year	Black, Asian or Ethnic background	White (including white European and other white backgrounds)
2019	7	17
2020	10	11
2021	10	11
2022	12	12
2023	11	13
Total #	50	65
% of Total	43.48%	56.52%

Impacts Accelerator in the Press



Achievements

The success of Accelerator is demonstrated not just through the professional development of the managers but of the talent they represent.

The numbers below speak for themselves.

40+

Award
Nominations



8

Top 40
singles



13

Top 40
albums



1

#1 album



Highlights

2 BBC Critics Choice Awards [Winner]

1 Scottish Album of the Year Award

2 Jazz FM Award Nominations

1 Oscars Award Nomination

5 Grammy Award Nominations

5 Brit Award Nominations

1 British Empire Medal Award

2 Mercury Prize Award Nominations

1 IVORS Award Nomination

9 Mobo Award Nominations

1 Honorary Doctorate

7 Artist & Manager Award Nominations

2 Music Week Award Nominations

1 Northern Irish Music Prize Nominations

The Shape of an Accelerator Year

Accelerator is a unique mixture of grant funding, training and peer support.

The annual grants were initially targeted at around £8,000 to £12,000 per manager, and aimed to bridge the gap between commissionable earning and living costs and help managers focus full time (or as near as) on their clients. The grants are paid quarterly and are dependent on managers completing the programme.

The year kicks off with an initial introductory session, and then features the core elements of an MMF education programme - *The Essentials and Mechanics of Music Management* and *Essentials of Live and Touring*, as well as our digital marketing course with Music Ally and mental health training.

Participants initially met in person monthly, although this evolved to shorter weekly sessions during the pandemic. We now run the programme on a hybrid basis - combining in-person and online sessions. Accelerator is also highly responsive to participants' needs and other topics are brought in throughout the year dependent on demand - including bespoke sessions on negotiation skills, working with lawyers and accountants, roundtables with live agents, and workshops on sync. Each year the programme topics and structures are reviewed to make sure it remains as responsive as possible to need.

Alongside group-based learning, each manager also works with the MMF team to identify their own professional development needs, network and skills gaps. A travel bursary for conference attendance is



offered, as is relationship-building with mentors from the wider MMF community. In many cases this mentoring results in a two-way process - allowing more established MMF members to experience new exchanges, ideas and approaches to the industry.

Another core strength of Accelerator is in the peer-to-peer networks formed within each annual cohort. Throughout the year, managers meet in-person and online and get to know each other - they come from very different backgrounds in terms of genre, geography and age, but quickly find common ground and similar experiences. The first year of the programme in 2019 ended with a 3-day retreat in Manchester where managers reflected on their business plans, their own leadership styles and future goals. The retreat was suspended in 2021 due to the pandemic but brought back in 2022 and is now annual again. It helps not only cement the bonds developed throughout the year but also acts as a transition for participants to become an active part of the MMF community.

The Power of YouTube Music on Maximising Artists Growth



Accelerator's primary grant funding for managers over the past 5 years has come from YouTube Music, who were also instrumental in devising the programme and seeing the value of investment in managers. YouTube Music has contributed to the growth of the artists represented by managers supported on Accelerator in a variety of ways.

For example, the programme has supported the discovery of new talent such as FLO who were still in the development stage when manager Rob Harrison was an Accelerator participant. A year later, and the girl-group, now signed to Island Records and winners of the highly esteemed BBC Radio 1 Sound of 2023 title, have received a wide range of support from YouTube Music, including recognition as a BRITs Hero Artist for a 2023 marketing campaign, placement on billboard posters and funding from YouTube's Artist and Label Shorts programme to produce exclusive short-form video content.

Top 10 artist Wes Nelson was discovered by managers Rian Zoll Khan and Ian Tunstall who met in the inaugural 2019 program. Wes rapidly built an audience on YouTube Music and has clocked up a massive 1,953,029 minutes of watch time since his debut single 'See Nobody' became the first of 3 Top 10 singles in 2020.

Elsewhere, fresh talent such as PinkPantheress, co-managed by Phoebe Gould, rocketed to over 500,000 YouTube channel subscribers. Meanwhile, Callum Reece, who claimed the title of Breakthrough Manager at the 2022 Artist Manager Awards, saw his client Eliza Rose celebrate her BRITs nominations with a YouTube Shorts' 'red carpet moment' clocking up 704,488 view times on her 2022 summer smash single B.O.T.A.

Managers also used YouTube to expand income generation opportunities for their clients. For instance, the platform opened up new revenues for manager Chris Grey, whose client Gibbo sells beats via YouTube and developed a substantial audience for his work with a watch time of 1,436,788 minutes and impressive subscriber growth to over 125,000. The program has also enabled artists to access wider Google opportunities. SHYGIRL, managed by Sarah Mhamdi, was chosen by Google as one of their 2022 Passions collaborators, a branded content partnership that was born out of the artists and management team's long standing relationship with YouTube.

Accelerator's value to the industry

Accelerator is valued by a range of people from across the music industry, bringing forward the next generation of management leaders.

“Accelerator brings together a network of brilliantly talented and hard working people each year. From a live perspective the more managers who know about the skills, strategies and challenges within the industry, the better. Investment and education in developing music managers is essential to continue the success of UK Music”

— Summer Marshall, CAA

“Investment in the next generation of music managers is critical for the sustained growth and success of the music industry. As the industry continues to evolve and adapt to new technologies and trends, it is imperative that we prepare the next generation of music managers with the support, skills and knowledge they need to succeed. The investment is helping to foster diversity and inclusivity within the industry. By providing opportunities and resources for aspiring managers from all backgrounds, Accelerator is ensuring that a wider range of voices and perspectives are represented in the music business.

This, in turn, can lead to more innovative and creative approaches to artist development and management. Furthermore, we are not only nurturing the future leaders of the industry but also paving the way for the growth and success of the artists they will represent. Managers are the bridge between the creative talent and the business side of the industry, ensuring that artists can focus on their craft while still achieving commercial success.”

— Chloë Roberts, COO, YOUNG

“Over the past 5 years, the MMF’s evolving Accelerator programme has provided significant, high quality learning and development opportunities - both for UK music managers, and for the talent they represent. Initially supported by National Lottery Project Grants, the programme has generated a string of high profile successes, helping Accelerator participants develop the careers of artists including FLO, PinkPantheress, The Reytons and Bree Runway. But equally important is the way it has helped develop new networks and fostered greater diversity and inclusivity within the wider music industry, especially at a regional level. As the programme continues through our investment in the MMF as part of our National Portfolio, with participating music managers now more able to build sustainable businesses across the UK, we anticipate even more opportunities opening up for artists, songwriters, producers and performers of every genre.”

— Dr Claire Mera-Nelson, Director, Music, Arts Council England

Impacts

The real-life impacts on managers



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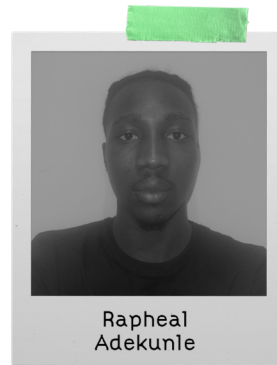
Telling 115 different stories would fill a novel.

Every Accelerator participant has undergone their own individual journey into music management, and all undoubtedly had their own personal goals and aspirations when joining the programme.

What follows are some short case studies detailing how Accelerator has enabled our alumni to thrive.

Rapheal Adekunle

Rax Productions



Following the phenomenal successes of his management client S1mba, whose 2020 track, *Rover*, has reached double Platinum certification, a Top 3 placing in the UK Charts and 500m+ streams, Raph has recently signed 3 acts to different major labels - with KAWALI (Atlantic), G!ft (Columbia) and zt.switch (EMI).

Still in his early 20s, and on a mission to develop artists from Swindon / Oxford and London, Raph's next step was to open Rax Studios in East London and to provide a bridge between the two music communities.

Taking inspiration from the achievements of Michael Adex, founder of the Manchester-based talent and entertainment company NQ, and Dumí Oburota, founder of Disturbing London, he used Accelerator to broaden his industry knowledge, expand his contacts and extend Rax's operations. Astonishingly, Raph has mostly fulfilled these aspirations from the confines of a hospital bed following a serious car accident in late 2022.

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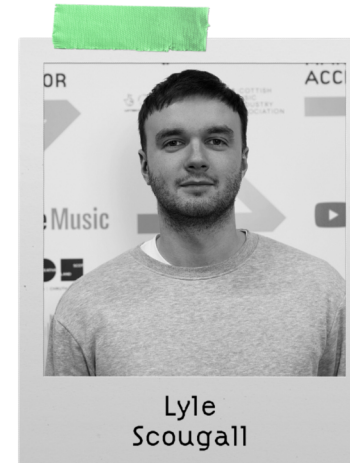
“I initially had a conversation with Paul in 2021. He knew about the successes we'd had with S1mba, that we'd had a big track, and he'd seen our accounts - so I can remember the first thing he asked is why I wanted Accelerator in the first place! For me, it was never about the funding. I was completely self-educated, and what I needed most was mentoring and to build relationships.

Through Accelerator, I've managed to do that. I've grasped a better understanding of music publishing and live music. I've also got to speak to some really inspiring people like Lyor Cohen and AJ Tracey's manager, Andy Musgrave. It's incredibly useful to get some proper time with such experienced individuals, to hear their views and perspectives.”

– Rapheal

Lyle Scougall

Mañana Music Management



Joining Accelerator in 2020 - the pandemic year - Lyle founded Mañana Music Management in Glasgow with business partner Nathan Dunphy, and originally represented two clients: Joesef, who had just been added to the coveted BBC Sound of 2020 longlist, and DJ/production duo **t e s t p r e s s**.

Now with an office in Glasgow, a record label, three additional artist clients - Jamie Holmes, Theo Bleak and Citizen Papes - and two full-time staff, Joesef has since signed a global deal with AWAL, released a debut album, and is currently preparing for a raft of international live shows in Europe and the US. For Lyle, such a trajectory would not have been possible with Accelerator support.

”

“As a new-ish manager based in Glasgow, Accelerator gave me a ready-made network to tap into, where many of the

other participants were further on in their careers than me. Having that network was one of the main benefits, and having access to a WhatsApp group where you can pick up some completely unbiased opinions. The other thing was the funding. That stopped me taking on another job to sustain myself. If that'd happened then we would have lost some momentum with Joesef and it really would have slowed things down.

“Accelerator also made me think of management as a business, and to focus on growing it as such. That was really instilled into us, and helped me work out where I wanted to go with my company and my ambitions - and now we've taken on more acts, and I've got two full-time members of staff. So I've grown the company because I've had the time and I've thought about the business.”

– Lyle

Lauren Roth de Wolf

Wolves Management

With over ten years in management, Lauren participated in the 2021 edition of Accelerator, and continues to work on a range of unique and successful independent projects - guiding the careers of artists Moonchild Sanelly and HEIDI, alongside Africa Express, the long-running large scale collaboration between international musicians, and The Orchestra of Syrian Musicians. She has enjoyed particularly rewarding successes with Moonchild Sanelly. The South African-born singer released her 2nd album, Phases, in 2022 via Transgressive, having previously collaborated with Beyonce, Gorillaz, Wizkid and Diplo, and headlined the opening night music party for SXSW 2023.

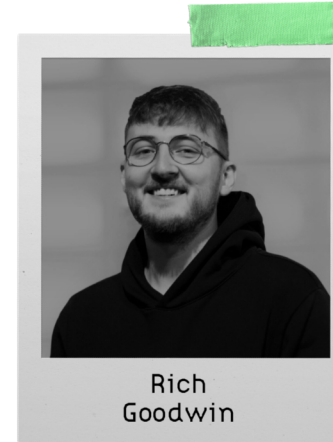
Although highly adept at building teams to deliver complex and intricate campaigns, Lauren states that Accelerator was pivotal in changing her mindset to the business of being a music manager - with individual participants encouraged to draw on the experiences and knowledge of others within their new professional network.



Lauren
Roth de Wolf

Rich Goodwin

The Reytons



Rich
Goodwin

Rich joined Accelerator in 2022 as sole manager of his Rotherham-based act the Reytons. The campaign strapline for The Reytons second album said it all: *No label. No backing. All Reytons*. On a totally independent basis, the band topped the UK Top 40 in January 2023, with their second album, *What's Rock n Roll?* Self-releasing their own material since 2017.

As well as their recorded successes, The Reytons have recently announced their biggest UK tour to date, including a show at Sheffield's Utilita Arena, alongside 15 festival appearances in the UK and Europe.

"Accelerator really helped with resourcefulness in terms of the knowledge and contact pool of fellow managers. The programme helped us appreciate that whether you're a freelancer or have formed a company, we are all running a business - and through peer support we now have help, knowledge and experience on tap. It's really encouraging to see so many messages in our group asking "does anybody know the best way to do this?" - there's no shame in asking for help, contacts or ideas - and one of us usually knows the answer! On top of being very useful, it's also really supportive for people who have faced so many challenges over the last few years.

"Accelerator encouraged me to build robust structures around the artists I manage. I literally make charts around each artist to show who does what for them, even down to the international marketing and distribution - I know who is responsible for each of those facets. Accelerator was also great for encouraging us to understand rights and royalties, and also the funding structures we should be engaging with to bring projects to life - particularly useful for mammoth projects like the new Orchestra of Syrian Musicians record."

- Lauren

"For us, "independent" means independence. It means running everything ourselves, the label side of things, the music videos, everything. It's all done in-house. It's a massive graft, but it pays dividends if you've got the skills set. There's stuff where you can't physically do it yourself, like distribution, online distribution or publishing, but in those instances, you're not necessarily bringing in partners, but you're more utilising services that are already available to everyone.

"For me, Accelerator provided a really good support network while we were building. I'd just quit my job and gone full-time with the band, and then I applied for the programme on the advice of a previous participant, Sam Meaghan. It wasn't daunting, because I'd joined the lads - we were a team of 5, and we knew which way we were going - but it just provided somewhere to get advice and to brush up on areas of the business where our understanding wasn't as strong.

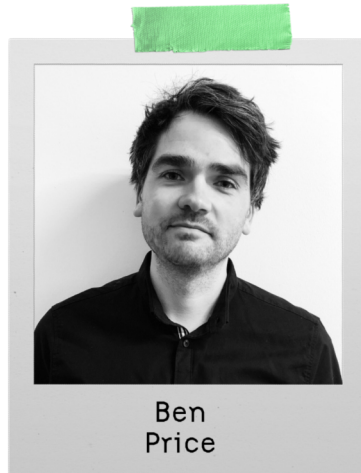
"One of the best things was just having shared experiences with other people who are on the course, or with senior figures who are dropping in. Just little coffees that were set up. I remember meeting up with Paul Craig, who manages Biffy Clyro and Mark (Hayton) who manages Pale Waves. It's nice to be able to speak to these people who've been in the business longer than you, while also sharing experiences with your peers."

- Rich

Ben Price

Harbourside Management

Based in Bristol, Ben joined 2021's Accelerator intake, representing talent including "bionic pop artist" Viktoria Modesta. Drawn from his own personal experiences, and through support from the Youth Music Incubator Fund, Ben has gone on to create a new initiative to increase the representation of disabled people in the music industry - both on the stage and behind the scenes. Employing a young upcoming manager, George Buckthought, to help deliver the project and with backing from Virgin Music, his Disability Empowerment Programme helped launch TU3SDAY as one of 2023's artists to watch, with plays from BBC Radio 6 Music's Mary Anne Hobbes and Jamz Supernova on Selector Radio, alongside coverage in DJ Mag. Ben is currently planning an expansion of the programme for later this year.



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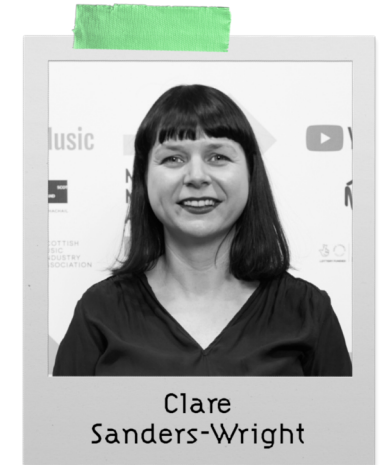
"I came to create the Disability Empowerment Programme on the back of my time on Accelerator. I was inspired by the learning resources that had been made available to me and the idea of training another young manager with a disability was appealing. George had recently left their studies at a well known music college, as they had found the course to be inaccessible. I liked the idea of making a more accessible learning framework for the many young managers out there in a similar position to George. I was over the moon after the internship when George informed me they had landed their first full time job, at Black Acre Records."

– Ben

Clare Sanders-Wright

Blackstar Management

When she joined Accelerator in 2020, Clare Sanders-Wright was successfully managing four artists as a sole trader and running a record label for Icelandic music legends, Sigur Rós. Fast forward to today, and she has established a new artist management arm for the award-winning marketing agency Blackstar with highly respected industry executive Olivia Hobbs, she is an MMF board member, and helped set up an online network and podcast - F***ing Normal - for parents of children with disabilities. Although only meeting up twice with the other participants before lockdown took hold, Clare says that Accelerator was crucial to resetting her career trajectory - helping her appreciate that she would thrive far better as part of a collaborative business or partnership.



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"Accelerator gave me the confidence to evolve and change my career. Because of the pandemic, our community ended up being more important than anyone could imagine. We were all at home, we were all on Zoom, and it ended up being a brilliant support network. The contacts and friendships that came out of it have been completely invaluable. Also, none of our artists went on tour that year, so the extra finance was essential."

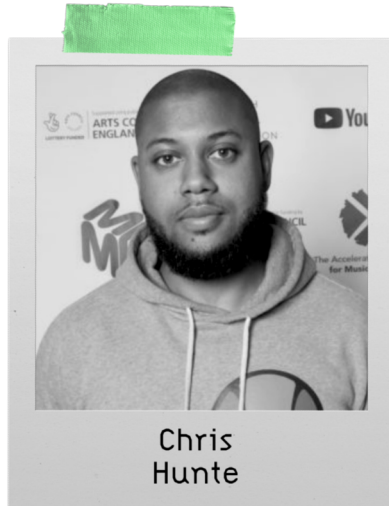
"And it was definitely helpful in allowing me to focus on building my business. Ultimately, what Accelerator made me realise is that I wanted a partner on the commercial side. There was a gap. There were people in that group whose skill set I didn't have, and I realised that I needed to find somebody like that - or to go in and work for a company that allowed me to be on the ground and focus on the more creative aspects. Before that, although I was also focussed on making money for my artists, I never concentrated on making money for myself."

"With Blackstar, I've now got that infrastructure. The company is already a hugely successful marketing agency, and its founder, Olivia Hobbs, is super business minded and one of the leading marketing experts in the industry. We've got 8 acts on the BSM roster, and although it's still in its infancy and we're still building and every day is a hustle, with Olivia I've found the partner who filled the gap."

– Clare

Chris Hunte

Addition



Since completing the inaugural Accelerator programme in 2019, when his Forbidden Artists' roster included Grammy producers and songwriters; Jerry Wonda, Daecolm, You Know Who and Culan, Chris took the decision to pivot away from music management during the pandemic - founding Addition, an entertainment venture agency which collaborates with high profile celebrities, creators and brands to launch commercial ventures from IP, trademarks and influence.

With offices in London and Los Angeles, clients in the new business include Jermaine Dupri, Destiny's Child, Aitch and, most recently, the Diego Maradona estate.

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“The Accelerator Programme really helped me. It expanded my network, I learned further about brand partnerships and

how to build connections. I was mentored by Matthew Thornhill, MD of Young, I collaborated with Ian Tunstall [also on 2019's programme] to set up dance label; So Forbidden which turned over millions of streams and one of the most valuable parts was when a group of us set up a separate WhatsApp chat, a really trusted space, where we could share thoughts. Ultimately, it led to what I'm doing now and, if I had the opportunity, I would definitely do it again - it was such an incredible experience to have conversations with other managers, to build relationships and find the value gaps within the industry.

However, to be brutally honest, I found that it was ventures and commercial work that really suited me. My management experience was still important. It allowed me to work directly with artists and understand their mindset, as well as take on the lessons of the pandemic and the importance of diversifying revenue streams. With that knowledge, I know this was the road I wanted to go down. But having that understanding of artists was really crucial, and I'm now liaising with other managers every day in my work with Addition.”

– Chris

Lulu Davis

Byrne and Sprich Management



Lulu joined the first Accelerator cohort in 2019. Her company, Incendia Music, specialised in progressive rock and metal music acts, including the synth-metal band Voyager. During the pandemic, Lulu teamed up with two other managers, taking her roster to a newly formed company - Byrne and Sprich Management - where she is currently Head Of Music. Already hugely experienced in developing artists internationally, in February 2023 Voyager were selected as Australia's entry for the Eurovision Song Contest with the song Promise.

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“Accelerator helped me in a number of different ways. I'd already been managing for 9 years, but the programme gave me some really important insights into how some of the bigger management companies were structured, and how they worked with accountants, lawyers and other professionals.

“It also gave me confidence. Female managers are a real rarity in the rock world, so it was really nice to be able to connect with my peers, to make friendships, and to understand how they run their businesses. Although I specialise in rock and metal, I was always keen to move beyond that box, and to broaden my scope by learning from other genres.

“I've taken all these experiences into my current role at Byrne and Sprich. In this new company, we work very much as a team, and although we oversee our own rosters, we collaborate, capitalise on our individual skill sets, and coordinate our efforts for optimal results. I loved my time as an independent manager, but I also realise that as part of a collective and by working together we can achieve a lot more for our artists. I now have the ability to focus on the bigger moves for my clients and that's where I really have the opportunity to do my best work as a manager.”

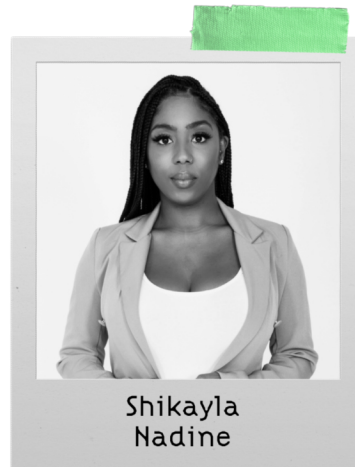
– Lulu

Shikayla Nadine

SNM Management

Cultivating a passion for management whilst assisting Waka Flocka's manager, Shikayla represented Rebecca Garton and Levelle London when she joined Accelerator in 2021.

Now with a roster of five artists, as well as taking on additional staff, she has utilised her experiences on the programme to pursue opportunities at international conferences and industry events - most recently at SXSW, where SNM Management client Kadeem Tyrell was performing, including a high-profile showcase at the British Music Embassy. Shikayla also made a significant contribution to the MMF's 2021 Guide to Mental Health.



"I had always been in management on my own, so having a group of people around me was fantastic. However, on top of that, Accelerator helped develop my company and also my personal brand as a manager. It raised my profile and helped me build a bigger roster because people started to pay attention to the work that I was doing.

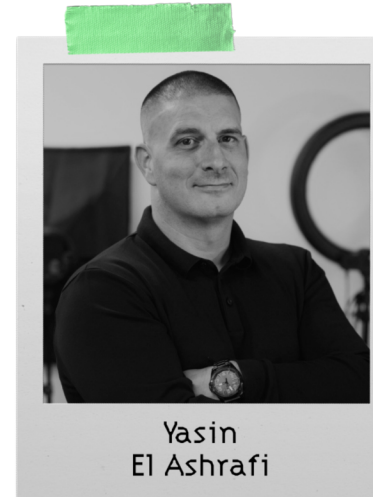
I did a talk with the MMF for International Women's Day which people seemed to like, and that led to interest from other organisations and agencies such as Nova Scotia Music Week where I did panels from a manager's perspective about developing artists. I then spoke at Wide Days, Focus Wales, Break Out West and The Great Escape. All of this has been fantastic for relationship building. Meeting more people from other countries and from other parts of the music industry has undoubtedly help grow my business, which has then benefited my artists.

For me, Accelerator basically changed my whole life. It's allowed me to have a focus on my business, and have a community that I can always tap into. I know if there's anything I'm unsure about, that I can hit up someone from the group, or I can speak to Paul, and they can either help me or push me in the right direction. It's a great support system and we're like a community now. I'm co-managing an artist with Steve (Odufuye) who was an ex-Accelerator, I speak to Rob (Harrison) and Michael (Lambert), and when I was out at SXSW with Taisha (Johnson), I met SIPHO's manager who is a current Accelerator. We're taking over!"

– Shikayla

Yasin El Ashrafi

HQ Familia



Joining Accelerator in 2022, Yasin had already received recognition in his hometown of Leicester as founder of the HQ Recording Studio and the HQ Familia record label, and as Director of HQ CAN (Community Arts Network) Community Interest Company - named Leicester Mercury Young Business Executive of the Year and Prince's Trust Mentor of the Year in 2018, receiving a British Empire Medal in 2020, picking up the Association of Independent Music's Local Hero Award in 2021 and recently being awarded an honorary doctorate in music by DMU University.

Managing 8 artists who are being developed by HQ Familia, he stresses how the programme helped consolidate HQ's community structures, while building links with the wider music industry and attracting bigger artists into the HQ studio facilities - including, recently, the acclaimed Birmingham rapper Mowgs, alongside corporate clients such as gaming and sportswear brands.

"Developing a music business in Leicester can feel quite isolating, but Accelerator allowed me to take things more seriously and to increase my overall understanding of how the music industry works. Having a community of managers and professionals, of whom I can ask questions or go to for advice, that has made my confidence alot stronger.

Business-wise it's also improved how we operate at HQ. Accelerator has provided me with an entire network all over the country who I can just go to for advice. Beforehand, I was on the outside, but now it's connected me to the entire industry. It was a real entry point. On the flipside, because I've been on the programme, and because MMF have tipped me as someone to watch, it's also helped raise my profile and helped us attract a higher calibre of artist who recognise the talent we've got here. We're now recognised as the go to place in our city for industry-standard services ."

– Yasin

Looking forward

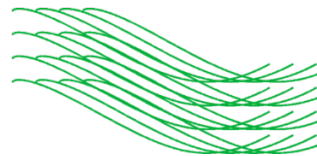
Accelerator has proven to be a strong intervention programme in supporting, growing, diversifying and sustaining independent music management businesses at a tipping point.

As we have gone through the programme, we consistently monitor and evaluate in order to improve the experience for participants.

At our 3 year point, we appointed independent evaluator Chris Bye to conduct qualitative interviews with stakeholders and applicants. We received feedback from stakeholders reporting **a score of 8.4 out of 10.**

Participant feedback is equally strong, with business sustainability remaining a challenge for many. Accelerator wishes to work with more partners who will directly invest in both management companies directly, as well as their artists, and recognise the potential long-term return on this investment.

We are also exploring ways in which we could further consider the needs of different places, communities and levels of experience within the management community that would benefit from elements of Accelerator. The MMF has recently been awarded funding from Arts Council England NPO and Creative Scotland and will extend its reach through these programmes.



Conclusion

Other areas for development highlighted are:

- + Continue to extend our advocates and decision-making partners and representatives across the country. Particularly engaging eligible women in music management by supporting applications from under-represented groups.
- + Champion more visibly our commitment to accessibility by explicitly encouraging eligible applications from disabled and neurodivergent people.
- + Consider further how we track equality barriers at our application stage, such as childcare support needs, disability or socio economic backgrounds through partnerships and data collection. Particular relationships will be built with talent development organisations in areas of the country where demand is evidenced by application but selection noticeably lower such as the East of England and Yorkshire and Humber regions.
- + Build more explicit relationships between independent managers on the programme and established music management companies, maximising two-way mentoring opportunities which are currently unfunded and informal.
- + Sustaining funding for managers. Demand is always higher than our capacity on the programme and we are entering a challenging time for the economy. MMF will continue to work with our brilliant existing partners and explore other funding opportunities to maintain the programme.

Accelerator is 5

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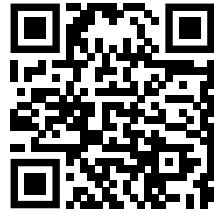
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*View the digital report & visit the
Accelerator homepage*



Accelerator might be our best-known professional development initiative, however, since receiving National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status from Arts Council England, the MMF is increasingly focussed on ensuring all our members receive support and training to build their business.

Our community of music managers is all-encompassing - whether you're taking your first steps into the industry, or whether you're an experienced executive with a wealth of global experience.

As well as joining a thriving network of other like-minded individuals, MMF can also - through our Associate Membership programme - put you in the front seat and provide a direct connection to leading companies and organisations, including YouTube Music, that empower managers and their clients to successfully navigate the modern music business.

A game changing programme like Accelerator is only possible because of the generosity and support of such partners, as well as an ever-growing roll call of mentors, educators and experts.

If you would like to join us and support the MMF's work, then please get in touch. Only by working together can we help ensure that tomorrow's music business is more equitable, inclusive and artist-friendly than today's.